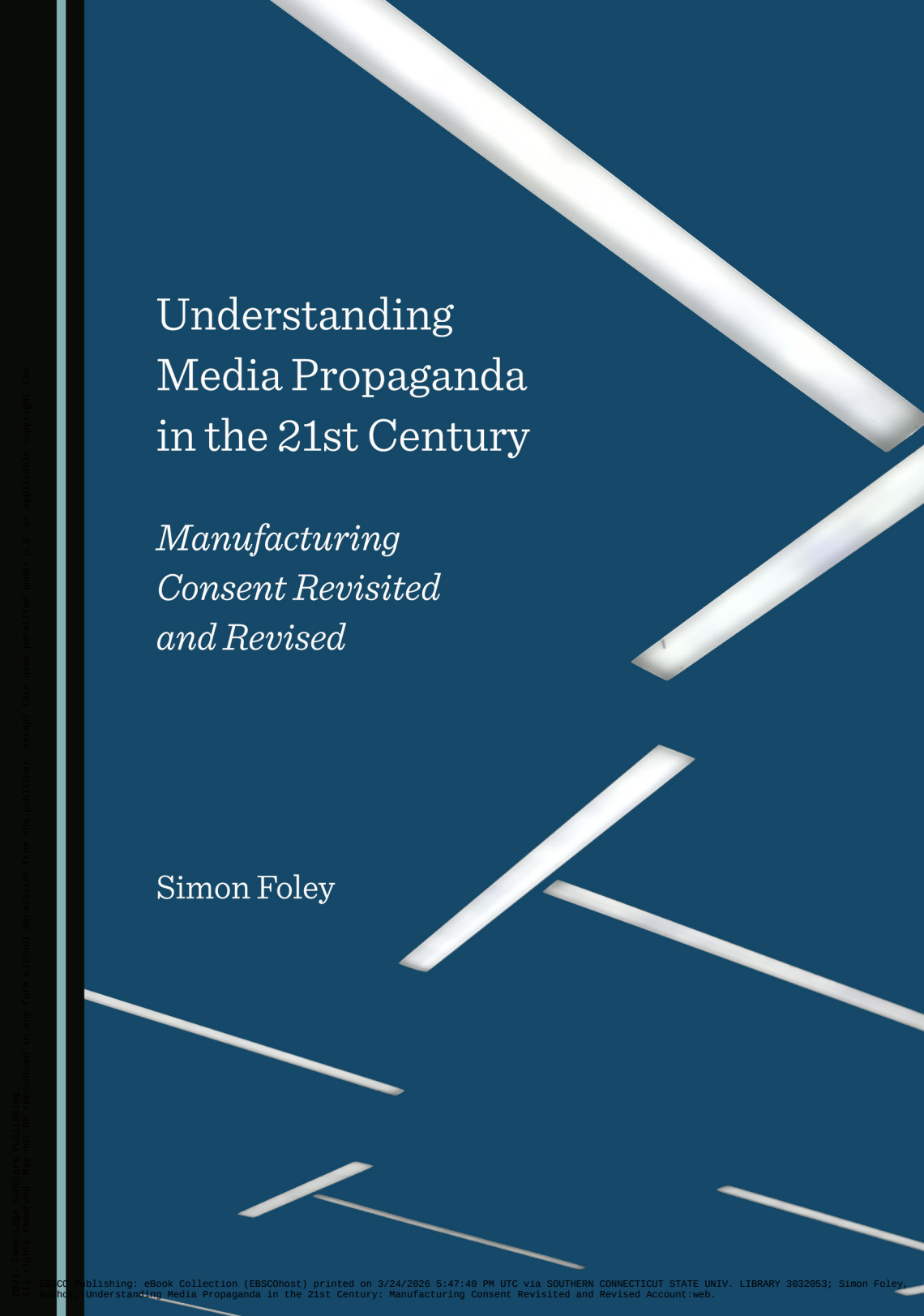




Understanding Media Propaganda in the 21st Century

*Manufacturing
Consent Revisited
and Revised*

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INTRODUCTION

Why another academic book on the issue of propaganda and fake news? Hopefully, the prospective reader will not be asking themselves this question. However, if they are, my response takes multiple forms. Firstly, I do not think one can have enough books on this vital, and still, from certain perspectives, underexplored subject matter. Secondly, unlike most of the currently available work on this subject, this book examines the liberal media as vehicle of ideology question by investigating its coverage of mainly foreign policy issues involving a so-called official enemy.

Another factor that distinguishes this book from similarly titled competition, at least since the election of Trump, is that its subject matter is neither the low hanging fruit of the establishment right-wing media nor its online counterparts. Rather, staying true to the Herman/Chomsky remit, its central focus is on whether some of the pre-eminent agenda-setting liberal media organizations are deserving of their current trusted fourth estate status.

What is propaganda?

There are numerous definitions of this much contested term. However, for the purposes of this book – due to its accessibility and conciseness – the definition underpinning its analysis is that provided by Ryan and Switzer. They state: “propagandists typically serve someone’s narrow agenda, make claims that are not evidence-based, spread lies and deception, supply incomplete or misleading information, serve authority figures, and deny or hide their own interests and prejudices. Journalists who are committed to an objective approach do none of these things” (2009, 49). This will be supplemented by Jowett and O’ Donnell’s recapitulation of what has become a truism within the critical analysis of media output. This is the contention that:

Typically in Western media, propaganda does not announce itself as such but, as Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky among many others have argued, achieves the purposes of propagandists through the ways in which issues are framed; emphasis and omission; privileging of certain sources, perspectives, information over possible alternatives; and in the uses of

language (verbal and visual) that assist these effects (Jowett and O' Donnell, 2015, 12).

Aims and objectives

It is because knowledge and responsibly active citizenship are mutually constitutive that truth is such a prized commodity in today's political world. Unfortunately for said citizen, such knowledge cannot be acquired via a Cartesian-like journey into one's inner psyche. Rather, the information required to make an informed decision and/or hold an informed opinion about a political matter comes to us in a mediated fashion courtesy of the media. This is particularly the case for the subject matter of this book. In other words, and as noted by Professor Stephen Walt:

If the economy is in free fall and millions of people are losing their jobs, if roads and bridges are crumbling, or if government agencies bungle a disaster relief effort, ordinary citizens can see this for themselves. But few Americans have independent information about Al Qaeda's inner workings, the details of U.S. trade agreements, the history of Iran's nuclear research program, the scope and impact of U.S. drone operations, or whether Russia did in fact hack the Democratic National Committee's computers in 2016. For these and countless other international topics, citizens have to rely on what the government officials or well-connected experts tell them, and the media that reports on these issues depends on these same sources for information as well. As a result, people inside the foreign policy community have considerable latitude to shape what the public thinks about key issues (Walt, 2018, 139).

However, according to the mainstream media (hereafter known as the MSM), all is not lost, as even in this age of so-called "fake news" there still exist reliable sources of accurate information that can answer the basic journalistic questions regarding the "who", "what", "where", "when" and "why" of a given event. Conversely, if such definitive judgements cannot be proffered – due to insurmountable pragmatic and/or epistemological hurdles – then citizens can rest assured that the journalistic equivalent of the Hippocratic Oath i.e. "do not claim knowledge of something you cannot possibly know" will not only be adhered to but such qualifications will also be made explicit to the audience in question. One of the primary aims and objectives of this book is to establish whether this is indeed the case.

The first chapter will provide an overview of the critical approach to understanding why MSM output takes the form it does. In addition, it will

demonstrate how and why such output is overtly propagandistic in its coverage of so-called official enemies of the Western military-industrial complex. The second chapter explains the methodological approach utilized by Herman and Chomsky in *Manufacturing Consent*. Using the compare and contrast approach I will then explain the methods I am using to analyze the primary data this book has collected. Finally, I will explicate the rationale behind my choice of media institutions and case studies.

Chapter 3 is where we begin our analysis of the case studies that make up the bulk of this book. The first case study under the microscope is the Russia-gate affair. The foundational claim underpinning Russia-gate is that Trump conspired with Putin to become US President. This claim was first advanced by anonymous officials in the US intelligence services – particularly, the FBI and CIA. This chapter is devoted to examining how *The Irish Times* and *The Guardian* covered (via its “fact-based reporting” and editorials written) key events of the Russia-gate narrative. In addition, this chapter will also focus on whether and how these media institutions treated the “Trump is a victim of a Deep State coup” counter narrative.

Chapter 4 examines what has become the ultimate third rail journalistic issue. Namely, did the Syrian government use chemical weapons against its own people or not. Since the election of Trump there have been two allegations that the Syrian government used chemical weapons against its own citizens. During his term as President the dominant narrative propagated by the MSM was that Trump was a lying fascist. This may well have been the case. However, in this instance both media institutions under investigation took what this lying fascist said regarding the Syrian government’s culpability at face-value. This chapter, which focuses on the *Irish Times*’s editorial response to the two alleged attacks, details how they justified such behavior.

As with so many of the case studies this book deals with their analysis takes place in the wake of the weapons of mass destruction (hereafter known as WMD) debacle. After it was demonstrated that the claim that Iraq had WMD was Western propaganda much of the MSM (including *The Guardian*) issued a metaphorical *mea culpa*. Furthermore, *The Guardian* issued a retrospective promise that they – and by extension their readers – won’t get fooled again. Chapter 5 examines how *The Guardian* covered an issue which in many respects resembles the WMD claims. This is the British government’s assertion that the Russian state attempted to assassinate Sergei Skripal – a double agent for British intelligence – on British soil via the use of a highly toxic nerve agent. This chapter’s objective is to establish

whether *The Guardian* did in fact keep its promise to its readers to not take its government's claims about the actions of an "official enemy" at face value.

In chapter 6 the case study under examination is the allegation that Russia offered a bounty to the Taliban to kill members of the US military currently occupying Afghanistan. As with all the case studies this book is investigating, the publication of this story ushered in its wake yet another predictable "get Trump" media frenzy amongst the MSM. Even though the original story was wholly reliant on anonymous sources within the US intelligence services, the American MSM failed to ask the basic journalistic question regarding whether the story was in fact true. Although journalistically reprehensible, from a critical perspective, this is not surprising. As will be explained in more detail anon, when it comes to certain issues, the critical position argues that MSM journalism should be seen as synonymous with power-elite propaganda. This state of affairs is compounded by two key facts which apply to all the case studies this book examines. First, the power elite who control the MSM in the US despised Trump and didn't want him reelected in 2020. Second, the American MSM influences how American citizens vote in American elections. This is not the case for either *The Guardian* or *The Irish Times*. Neither of these papers had any influence over how American citizens voted in the 2020 American election. Consequently, one of the key questions this chapter will answer is whether either of these media institutions deviated in any way from their US counterparts in their coverage of this story.

In *Manufacturing Consent* Herman and Chomsky devoted much space to their distinction between "worthy and unworthy victims." Chapter 7 of this book extends this concept to encompass the idea of worthy and unworthy whistle-blowers. To this end, it compares the coverage given to the CIA whistle-blower at the heart of Ukraine-gate with the scientists who investigated the alleged Syrian gas attacks while working with the OPCW. According to Herman and Chomsky's Propaganda Model because the CIA official is propagating a dominant power elite narrative, the coverage should be extensive and fawning. Conversely, because the OPCW whistle-blowers are disputing a dominant power elite narrative, the coverage should either be non-existent or extremely negative in nature. The aim of this chapter is to establish whether in this instance the Propaganda Model's predictive powers were either verified or falsified.

The assertion made by hand-picked members of the US intelligence services – mostly from the FBI and CIA – that Russia hacked the DNC emails is the

foundational claim of the Russia-gate saga. A key epistemological question the fourth estate journalist must ask, particularly in relation to such serious charges, is the “how do you know what you claim to know” question. Chapter 8 explores whether either paper under investigation ever asked this basic question when reporting/opining on the claim that Russia did indeed hack said emails.

In clear violation of the intellectual copyright fallacy the American MSM managed to construct a narrative that only Trump-loving racist white supremacists take issue with the pro-lockdown response to the Covid-19 pandemic. To test the hypothesis that a pro-lockdown approach to Covid-19 has become a new “liberal” orthodoxy, chapter 9 examines how both *The Irish Times*, and *The Guardian* covered the anti-lockdown side of the debate on Covid.

Chapter 10 is titled “Why did *The Guardian* and *The Irish Times* cover the case studies the way they did, and can the Propaganda Model explain the nature of the output in question?” As this title indicates, this is where we test the Propaganda Model’s epistemological bona fides regarding the subject matter at hand. If on examination its explanatory reach is found wanting, this chapter will also proffer a number of theoretical suggestions regarding what revisions are needed to fill any theory/praxis gaps.

Chapter 11, as the conclusion chapter, is where we sum up the books empirical and theoretical findings. In addition, it will also offer the reader some suggestions to help them distinguish the informational wheat from the proverbial chaff.

CHAPTER 1

THE CRITICAL APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING MEDIA OUTPUT

When embarking on a genealogy of the critical social scientist many scholars locate its origins within the Marxist framework or the neo-Marxist philosophy of the Frankfurt School. Whether this is true or not is essentially a moot point as what it means to be a critical social scientist in contemporary society and the role they perform – exemplified by the likes of Michael Parenti, Pierre Bourdieu, and Noam Chomsky – is no longer parasitic on a wholesale adherence to any given meta-narrative. Rather, as a natural ally of excluded groups and subjugated knowledge, the sensibility that unites the disparate theoretical affinities that characterize modern-day critical social science is a commitment to some broader hermeneutics of suspicion devoted to unmasking the lies and illusions the oppressors tell the oppressed (Swartz, 2013).

The legacy of Marx remains however in that the critical social scientist adheres to an “us and them” conflict theory typology in relation to how Western “democratic” societies are structured when it comes to the distribution and exercise of political and economic power. However, while the monopoly of force is with the few their favored means of controlling the many is not via the use or threat of overt violence. Rather, their concern is with the manipulation of hearts and minds. This need on the part of the ruling classes to induce a sense a false consciousness amongst the “masses” regarding the true nature of political reality stems from the fact that:

Those at the top understand that the corporate political culture is not a mystically self-sustaining system. They know they must work tirelessly to propagate the ruling orthodoxy, to use democratic appearances to cloak plutocratic policies (Parenti, 2007, 52).

It is this concern that brings us to the alleged fourth estate role of the media in holding the powerful accountable primarily through a willingness to combat their propaganda. A succinct but accurate definition of this fourth estate mandate in action is offered by award winning journalist Robert Fisk

when he states that the role of the journalist is “to challenge authority – all authority – especially so when governments and politicians take us to war, when they have decided that they will kill, and others will die” (Fisk, 2005, 2). As should be evident, the propositional content of Fisk’s definition of the fourth estate journalist is encapsulated within the standard conception of what journalists do. Namely, the primary role of the journalist is to “speak truth to power.” As a means to this end, two key methods are employed. First, the journalist, without fear or favor, attempts to establish the “who”, “what”, “where”, “when” and “why” of a given political event. This dedication to empirical research is in turn complemented by a particular attitudinal approach. We can call this the fourth estate journalistic mindset. This entails a commitment on the part of the journalist to maintain a critical distance from the events they are reporting on and dispassionately evaluate the evidence they are working with. In other words, what a reporter personally feels about X should not influence what they write about X. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the constitutive question on the tip of every genuine fourth estate journalists’ tongue is the “what’s the evidentiary basis for that claim” question.

As implied above, the reason that citizens need the journalist to play this role is predicated on the verified belief that those in power have a predisposition to lie about what they are doing and why they are doing it. In effect, because the fourth estate subject position is parasitic on the “why is this lying bastard lying to me” principle, the genuine fourth estate mindset entails an extreme skepticism on the part of the journalist when tasked with examining power elite claims (Leigh, 2005).

While there is a convergence between the critical tradition and the MSM regarding the need for a fourth estate they differ in answering the question as to whether the latter performs this function. Consequently, while the conventional wisdom propagated by the MSM is that it does indeed represent a fourth estate whose *raison d’être* is to speak truth to power, from a critical media studies perspective this comforting narrative is disputed. For example, according to Professor Boyd-Barrett:

Democratic theory presupposes a public communications infrastructure that facilitates the free and open exchange of ideas. No such infrastructure exists. Mainstream media are owned and controlled by a small number of large, multi-media and multi-industrial conglomerates that lie at the very heart of U.S. oligopoly capitalism and much of whose advertising revenue and content is furnished from other conglomerates (Barrett, 2019).

In a similar vein, according to Professor McChesney:

Professional journalism is arguably at its worst when the U.S. upper class—the wealthiest 1 or 2 percent of the population, the owners of most of the productive wealth, as well as the top corporate executives and government officials—is in agreement on an issue. In such cases (for example, the innate right of the United States to invade another nation or the equation of private property and the pursuit of profit with democracy), media will tend to accept the elite position as revealed truth and never subject the notion to questioning. The classic example of this phenomenon today is the virtual blackout of media coverage of the CIA and of the military budget (McChesney 2016, 150).

Given the role played by the CIA in most of the case studies this book examines, the above quote by Professor McChesney regarding “the virtual blackout of media coverage of the CIA” should be internalized forthwith as it illustrates a foundational critical principle regarding the oligarchical nature of most Western “democracies” and the role played by the MSM in maintaining such configurations of power. For example, in response to a “whether the public can handle the truth” type of question regarding the documented behavior of this singularly unaccountable nexus of power, famed US liberal journalist/author David Talbot states the following:

My last book, *The Devil’s Chessboard*, wasn’t even reviewed by *The Washington Post* or *New York Times*. They blackballed it. In fact, the editor at *The Washington Post* told my publicist that they wouldn’t touch my book with a 10-foot pole. This is *The Devil’s Chessboard*, which was about Allen Dulles, the former head of the CIA and the rise of America’s secret government and their involvement in these terrible crimes. I’ve worked in newsrooms. I see the pack mentality that develops editorially. People are afraid to stick their neck out in something controversial. The press can be very timid. Also, unfortunately, I think the mainstream press, the establishment press, the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, the major TV networks are very tied to the national security state. Just watch CNN every night and MSNBC, see how many of their guests are former CIA guys, FBI, high level national security think tanks. I mean half their guests are from the national security state. How can they report independently on this? (Talbot, 2019).

As implied, the critical approach takes issue with the MSM’s self-image as the key mechanism in the production of an informed citizenry. Instead, it argues that one of their primary objectives is to construct narratives that reproduce pre-existing power relations. That is, by attempting to naturalize dominant political discourses as objective, rational, common-sense explanations they – in their role as ideological gatekeepers – manufacture popular consent for power-elite policies which may otherwise not gain widespread popular support. In effect, and this is another key point for the

reader to imbibe, a constitutive precept of the critical paradigm is the view that “the ruling class in any state views the people it rules as lesser beings to be manipulated, coerced, and exploited. The rulers institute all manner of systems – which function as protection rackets – to assure their class prerogatives” (Valentine, 2016).

This appearance/reality distinction regarding how a given Western power elite views the majority of its domestic population as an enemy which needs to be controlled is a fundamental principle underpinning the critical approach. The point is that when it comes to certain fundamental policy issues – especially those which impinge on foreign policy – Western democracies can be likened to the proverbial exclusive club which has denied membership to the majority of the population. Hence, the need to carefully police the parameters of permissible debate in order to preempt the possible occurrence of any dangerous seditious-like epiphanies on the part of the proles. To see what constitutes a dangerous seditious-like epiphany read the following quote by the iconic American satirist George Carlin:

Forget the politicians. The politicians are put there to give you the idea that you have freedom of choice. You don't. You have no choice. You have owners. They own you. They own everything. They own all the important land. They own and control the corporations. They've long since bought and paid for the senate, the congress, the state houses, the city halls, they got the judges in their back pockets and they own all the big media companies, so they control just about all of the news and information you get to hear. They got you by the balls. They spend billions of dollars every year lobbying to get what they want. Well, we know what they want. They want more for themselves and less for everybody else. But I'll tell you what they don't want: They don't want a population of citizens capable of critical thinking. They don't want well-informed, well-educated people capable of critical thinking. They're not interested in that. That doesn't help them. That's against their interests. That's right. They don't want people who are smart enough to sit around a kitchen table to figure out how badly they're getting fucked by a system that threw them overboard 30 fucking years ago. They don't want that.

It is within this critical milieu that many critical theorists believe the foundational work on critical media analysis was born. This of course refers to Herman and Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent*, first published in 1988. A primary objective of this book was to provide a coherent analytical framework as a means to understanding why Western media output, particularly when it comes to its coverage of “official enemies” – both internal and external – takes the misleading form it does. To this end the authors formulated what they called the “Propaganda Model” of the MSM.

The Propaganda Model posits five filters that news has to pass through before we get to read, hear, or see it. These filters, by shaping the incentives, resources, and worldviews of the people who report the news, construct an ideological consensus between rank-and-file journalists and political and economic elites that is antithetical to the fourth estate remit. It is important at this stage to note that Herman and Chomsky are not stating that the Western power elite constitute the proverbial homogenous blob who agree on everything. Rather, they are explicitly stating that you will indeed find vigorous debate on an array of power elite issues in the MSM. The propagandistic issue concerns the narrow ideological parameters determining the acceptable limits of such debate. They state:

Where the powerful are in disagreement, there will be a certain diversity of tactical judgments on how to attain generally shared aims, reflected in media debate. But views that challenge fundamental premises will be excluded from the mass media even when elite controversy over tactics rages fiercely (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, 35).

For the purposes of this book one example of a fundamental premise which we can expect to be excluded by the MSM in its coverage of the relevant case studies under examination is the fact that the CIA has a documented record of trying to undermine US Presidents who disagree with its view of how foreign policy should be conducted.

According to Herman and Chomsky the following are the five filters the MSM's dissemination of political information must pass through before reaching our eyes and ears:

- (1) The size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms
- (2) The reliance on advertising as a primary source of income
- (3) The sourcing problem. This is the contention that the media is over reliant on access to information provided by governments, business and "experts" funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power.
- (4) The use of "flak" as a means of disciplining the media. Flak is defined as "negative responses to a media statement or program." In operational terms flak typically involves a given journalist/editor/ or owner of a media institution being subjected to various kinds of pressures – smear campaigns/petitions/threatened legislation/advertising boycotts – to tow the proverbial party line.

- (5) The existence of a dominant “us versus the other” divide and conquer official enemy-type ideology (previously subsumed under the “anti-communism” label) which functions as a control mechanism.

CHAPTER 11

CONCLUSION

We've come to the final chapter so let's take stock. First of all some general points about the Propaganda Model. There is a vast academic literature both valorizing and critiquing this analytical blueprint in equal measure. As a practicing academic there is a real temptation to engage with this wider debate in a suitably "scholarly fashion." For those who don't know, this typically involves providing you, the reader, with a comprehensive literature review. I don't share this view. In fact, if I were made King/Queen of the social science field for a period of time, I would invert the current hierarchy privileging this trained monkey mode of exposition over the collection of primary data and/or embarking on genuinely innovative conceptual analysis. While this book has certainly collected a lot of primary data, I will leave it up to you to adjudicate whether the analysis engaged in comes anywhere close to the "innovative" classification.

Although this preamble may seem beside the point, I have included it for a reason. Namely, and apropos my previously referenced "to quote or not to quote" deliberations, perhaps the biggest obstacle to independent critical thinking – the key technique in identifying propaganda – is the perennial human fear of losing credibility in the eyes of the social tribe you align yourself with. At the risk of taking academic patronizing to its nth degree, please, in as much as possible, don't succumb to such temptations. By extension, and for the same reason, don't fall prey to the so-called "argument from authority." In the study of logical fallacies the "argument from authority" refers to the predisposition to outsource your thinking to a relevant/irrelevant expert. As this book demonstrates, genuine experts have a tendency to disagree. As this book also demonstrates, the notion that the MSM constitutes a metaphorical "Virgil" whose *raison d'être* is to help you navigate the fog of power-elite propaganda that is engulfing us all, is, or should be, patently absurd.

However, to repeat the point this book has been making throughout, this doesn't mean the MSM won't give you the facts and figures on everyday

non-controversial issues. Given that this process still involves people you don't know telling you what to think, a degree of skepticism is still warranted. In this case "the trust but verify" cliché comes to mind. Having made this distinction, it's crucial you appropriate the "power-elite" classification and analyze the workings of the political world accordingly.

To finish this section, another point regarding the power of classifications to stifle critical thinking needs to be made. That is, if some powerful individual/institution/entity tells you that "only conspiracy theorists believe X", it's well worth doing your own independent research into what exactly X refers to. Its etymology remains contested, but when it comes to combating power-elite propaganda a good epistemological rule of thumb to apply is the "to know who rules over you, simply find out who you are not allowed to criticize" aphorism.

Although no literature review lets finish with a brief examination of the "is the Propaganda Model still relevant" question. So yea or nay? From a critical perspective this question continues to answer itself. In other words, the filters that constitute the Propaganda Model remain an essential conceptual lens through which to view the agenda setting media and their output. For example, while it played no part in our analysis, the ownership issue remains a crucial starting point when trying to understand why MSM output takes the form it does. To restate a central tenet of *Manufacturing Consent*, most MSM institutions are first and foremost businesses. That is, they exist to make money for their owner. Whether the latter is an individual, a family, a corporation or a conglomerate, this principle, for the most part holds true. I could expand on this qualification but that would be going beyond the remit this book has set itself. Suffice to say, there are exceptions to this rule. These typically involve the owner, in whatever manifestation they take, effectively subsidizing a loss-making media institution for ideological or propaganda reasons.

In relation to the advertising filter I think the answer is a little more nuanced. For example, a convincing argument can be made that it remains a crucial source of revenue for most TV news. On the other hand, with the advent of the subscription model, a similarly convincing argument can be made that agenda setting newspapers are less reliant on advertising revenue than they had been. This version of "the medium is the message" distinction also applies to the "official sources filter." Although it's obviously issue dependent, as this book has demonstrated, agenda-setting newspapers have, again in principle, far more autonomy in this regard than their visual counterparts.

While self-praise is no praise, I do think my widening of this filter, may, if pursued, bear some important research fruit in terms of explaining the output of certain “elite” MSM institutions. For those who don’t remember, this addition involved subsuming other agenda setting media organizations under the “official sources” category. In relation to the “flak filter”, as the definition stands I’m much less convinced than Herman and Chomsky that it exerts anything like the causal power they bestow upon it. This is especially the case when it comes to the newspaper industry. In relation to the latter, doing proper fourth estate journalism isn’t difficult. For the most part, when it is done properly, any incoming “flak” worthy of the name should be minimal to non-existent. To substantiate this conclusion I advanced two key arguments. First, there was “the who cares enough” argument. Second, I highlighted the paradoxes integral to what I termed the “oxygen of publicity problem.” Can the explanatory power of this filter be improved? As you know I think it can. To recap, this would involve expanding its current definition to encompass the notion of internal flak. This concept refers to flak in the form of journalists within a media institution “rebellious” against the inclusion of a story they don’t agree with on ideological/political grounds.

This brings us to the last of the five filters. In relation to the case studies we’ve examined the “official enemy” filter proved to have the most explanatory power of all. Given this book’s foreign policy focus this should perhaps come as no surprise. After all, as originally formulated by Herman and Chomsky, this was essentially the default filter to invoke when grappling with why the MSM didn’t employ a fourth estate methodology in its coverage of how and why powerful Western countries like the US adopt the imperialistic foreign policies they do. As this last sentence implies, given that nothing much has changed in the foreign policy sphere since the publication of *Manufacturing Consent* in 1988, this filter should retain its default status where such coverage is concerned.

However, as evidenced by the MSM’s systematic use of a tribal “us/them” frame in its coverage of the so-called “populist movement,” I fear the “official enemy” filter will increasingly need to be called upon to explain why the MSM’s coverage of certain domestic issues takes the form it does. In other words, I think the illiberal divisive approach adopted by *The Irish Times* and *The Guardian* in the Covid-19 case study we looked at, is here to stay. That is, both papers, again in common with the agenda-setting MSM as a whole, seem determined to convince the public that it’s no longer allowed to “agree to disagree.” In its place, they’re trying to institute an Orwellian-like “public sphere” where anyone who deviates from the party

line is to be demonized and treated accordingly. For example, at the time of writing the imposition of a Covid passport hasn't yet come to pass. No doubt, when this discriminatory measure does become reality, these so-called liberal papers will unironically condemn the proverbial naysayer as a manifestation of the fascist enemy within.

For more on this thesis please do yourself a favor and read one of the most important books on how and why the MSM operate the way they do since *Manufacturing Consent*. Written by Matt Taibbi in 2019, its titled "Hate Inc: Why Today's Media Makes Us Despise One Another." On that not very optimistic note we have reached the end of the book. To paraphrase a favorite quote from a once famous TV show, the last most apt thing to say is "be careful, it's a propaganda jungle out there."